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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

WILLIAM HOUSTON,
Plaintiff,
v.
L. ELDRIDGE, et al.,
Defendants.

No. 2:16-cv-2561 WBS KJN P

ORDER REFERRING CASE TO POST-
SCREENING ADR PROJECT AND
STAYING CASE FOR 120 DAYS

Plaintiff is a state prisoner, proceeding without counsel. Defendants have answered the complaint.

The undersigned is referring all post-screening civil rights cases filed by pro se inmates to the Post-Screening ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) Project in an effort to resolve such cases more expeditiously and less expensively. Defense counsel from the Office of the California Attorney General has agreed to participate in this pilot project. No defenses or objections shall be waived by their participation.

As set forth in the screening order, plaintiff has stated a potentially cognizable civil rights claim. Thus, the court stays this action for a period of 120 days to allow the parties to investigate plaintiff's claims, meet and confer, and then participate in a settlement conference.

There is a presumption that all post-screening civil rights cases assigned to the

1 undersigned will proceed to settlement conference.¹ However, if after investigating plaintiff's
2 claims and speaking with plaintiff, and after conferring with defense counsel's supervisor,
3 defense counsel in good faith finds that a settlement conference would be a waste of resources,
4 defense counsel may move to opt out of this pilot project.

5 By filing the attached notice within thirty days, the parties shall notify the court whether
6 they waive disqualification for the undersigned to hold the settlement conference or whether they
7 request a different judge. Plaintiff shall also indicate his preference to appear in person or by
8 videoconference, if available. Failure to timely file such notice will result in the case being set
9 for settlement conference before a different judge.

10 Within thirty days, the assigned Deputy Attorney General shall contact Matt Caspar,
11 Courtroom Deputy, at (916) 930-4187, to schedule the settlement conference. If difficulties arise
12 in scheduling the settlement conference due to the court's calendar, the parties may seek an
13 extension of the initial 120 day stay.

14 Once the settlement conference is scheduled, at least seven days prior to conference, the
15 parties shall submit to the assigned settlement judge a confidential settlement conference
16 statement. The parties' confidential settlement conference statement shall include the following:
17 (a) names and locations of the parties; (b) a short statement of the facts and alleged damages; (c) a
18 short procedural history; (d) an analysis of the risk of liability, including a discussion of the
19 efforts made to investigate the allegations; and (e) a discussion of the efforts that have been made
20 to settle the case.

21 In accordance with the above, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

22 1. This action is stayed for 120 days to allow the parties an opportunity to settle their
23 dispute before the discovery process begins. Except as provided herein or by subsequent court
24 order, no other pleadings or other documents may be filed in this case during the stay of this
25 action. The parties shall not engage in formal discovery, but the parties may elect to engage in
26 informal discovery.

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28 ¹ If the case does not settle, the court issue a discovery and scheduling order.

1 2. Within thirty days from the date of this order, the parties shall file the attached notice,
2 informing the court whether they waive disqualification for the undersigned to hold the settlement
3 conference, or whether they choose to have the settlement conference held by a different judge.

4 3. Within thirty days from the date of this order, the assigned Deputy Attorney General
5 shall contact Matt Caspar, Courtroom Deputy, at (916) 930-4187, to schedule the settlement
6 conference.

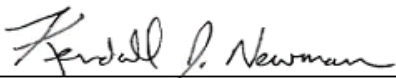
7 4. At least seven days prior to the settlement conference, each party shall submit a
8 confidential settlement conference statement, as described above, to the judge assigned for
9 settlement.

10 5. If a settlement is reached at any point during the stay of this action, the parties shall file
11 a Notice of Settlement in accordance with Local Rule 160.

12 6. The Clerk of the Court shall serve copies of (a) plaintiff's complaint (ECF No. 1), (b)
13 the screening order (ECF No. 10), and (c) the instant order, on Supervising Deputy Attorney
14 General Monica Anderson.

15 7. The parties remain obligated to keep the court informed of their current address at all
16 times during the stay and while the action is pending. Any change of address must be reported
17 promptly to the court in a separate document captioned for this case and entitled "Notice of
18 Change of Address." See L.R. 182(f).

19 Dated: April 3, 2017

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21 _____
22 KENDALL J. NEWMAN
23 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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